

# HELP FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN

World Vision sees every child as a child of God. Every girl and every boy is deserving of love and protection. Yet traditional stereotypes often rob girls from living out the full potential God wants for them. Girls are often the first taken out of school to work when a family is in need. Caring Gift Catalog donors like you are changing that. Your support is helping girls receive an education and is enabling men and boys to see beyond traditional roles that limit them.

## BANGLADESH

### *Empowering a family to improve the lives of their children*

For a year after their father had a stroke, Priority, 12, and her sister Moumita, 19, worked in a candle-making factory. Their mother started a business selling spices but could not afford to pay their school fees, so they quit school. Priority said that at the factory, “we worked squatting on the floor for nine hours a day, six days a week, and earned \$48 a month to buy food for our family.”

World Vision intervened in multiple ways. The parents received a cash grant, produce, and business training to expand their grocery, as well as training in positive parenting. Priority received life skills education to help her gain confidence, and her younger brother began attending a Child-Friendly Learning and Recreation Center. The family’s income improved. This enabled the father to afford medication, recover, support the family business, and find a job as a security guard. Priority and Moumita returned to school.

At school, Priority excelled in math and began dreaming of becoming a physician. Her mother Jhumki said, “Thank you, World Vision, for creating an opportunity to raise our income and help ourselves.”



*Priority (center) and her parents and siblings all benefited from support that enabled her and her sister to return to school.*

## INDIA

### *Combating child marriage*

Mounira, 17, lives in a rural village in India near Kolkata. “In the village, they talk about the girl child and increase [or exaggerate] her age,” she said. “They subtly instill fear in the parents and ask, ‘Will your daughter ever get married?’”

Mounira recently completed 10th grade. She juggles multiple responsibilities at home. In the morning, she cooks breakfast and lunch for her grandparents and younger brother, since her parents live in Kolkata. Traveling to school requires three hours round-trip. After she returns, she walks for an hour to fetch water, cares for the family’s chickens, makes clothing for sale, and studies until sunset.

One day, her father returned from Kolkata to announce her wedding. Mounira was shocked. During a prior visit to the city, a family with a son of marrying age noticed her. Later, they convinced her father that she was ready to marry.

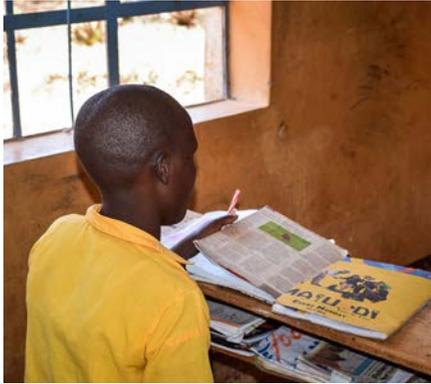
Mounira, a member of a World Vision Girl Power group, knew the dangers of child marriage and what happens through pregnancy at a young age. Her friends suggested she call a local child helpline, but she feared this would result in her father going to jail. Instead, she spoke with him. She shared how she wanted to complete her education, reminded him that child marriage is illegal in India, and asked him to resist pressure to give her away. It worked. He informed the groom’s family that she was no longer available. That’s girl power!



*Mounira (center) is grateful for the encouragement she receives from members of her Girl Power Group.*

## KENYA

### *Hope after forced marriage*



*Cherop has resumed her studies at a boarding school.*

Cherop\*, 14, always wanted to be a doctor. A few years ago, this dream was nearly wiped away. “My brothers and father informed me that I had to stop learning so I could get circumcised and be married off,” she recalled. “The money from my dowry would then be used to pay school fees for my brothers.”

Despite her pleas, Cherop was forcefully married off. She struggled physically and mentally when she became pregnant. One morning, her body finally caved. “I collapsed,” she said. “And when I woke up, I was in the hospital, had already been operated on, and had a baby. The doctors said that if I hadn’t been brought there on time, I would have lost my life.”

The experience shook Cherop. It motivated her to seek a better future for herself and her child. She moved back in with her parents. “Once the baby was much older, I [fled my parents’ home] and left the child there with my mother,” she said. “I had to go, as I was afraid my family would take me back to the husband I had run away from.”

After walking for two days and sleeping in the forest, she reached a World Vision office. World Vision enrolled her at Morpus Primary School, a boarding school. At the school, girls in her situation receive psychosocial support, life skills training, and assistance in navigating the complex experience of family reconciliation. If possible, they reunite with their parents and their own children.

*\* The girl’s name has been changed in this story to protect her identity.*

## SOUTH SUDAN

### *Bicycles empower girls and women to access services*

Josephine Bekita was smiling with excitement. In South Sudan’s Yambio County, her dream to own a bicycle just came true. She aims to become a nurse, and “going to school is now easy for me,” she said.



*Girls from Yambio County are elated about the new bicycles they received.*

Josephine was among 300 girls and young mothers who recently received bicycles through the support of generous Gift Catalog donors. “Thank you, World Vision, for remembering us,” said Sinoyosa Agbiamamu, 16. “We now feel empowered to move on with our access to education and other services. We shall make it.” Sentina Ngbagida, 18, another bike recipient, said, “I want to become the Minister of Health some day.”

During a handover ceremony for the bicycles, Mesfin Loha, World Vision’s national director in South Sudan, and Pia Phillip Michael, the Minister of Education, Gender, and Social Welfare for Gbudue state, exhorted the recipients to work hard, stay active in their communities, and use the bicycles to better themselves and others.